(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) TRAI has not submitted its recommendation.

Post offices functioning in rented buildings

468. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any scheme to allot fund for constructing building for post offices in the land lying vacant under the respective authority;

(b) if so, the details including the fund earmarked for the above and the number of post offices functioning in rented buildings for the last five years, year-wise and State-wise;, and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) An amount of rupees 49.15 crores was spent on 'Construction of Post Offices' during the 10th Five Year Plan. An amount of rupees 15.55 crores has been earmarked for the year 2007-08 for construction of post offices.

The information regarding number of post offices functioning in rented buildings for the last five years, year-wise and State-wise is being collected from the field units and will be laid on the Table of the House

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

Formulation of national sports policy

469. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL : Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to formulate any sports policy at national level on the lines of China and Japan;

(b) whether Government have taken any steps to ascertain reasons for, poor performance of India in Sports at international level; and

(c) whether Sports Authority of India (SAI) is responsible for the poor performance of India to some extent?

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) The Ministry has formulated a draft comprehensive National Sports Policy and posted it on its Website on 26 July, 2007. The draft will be finalized after consultation with all major stakeholders. The draft policy takes into account the best international practices for the comprehensive development of sports, keeping our requirements in mind.

(b) While it is a fact that there is considerable room for improvement on the standard of sports in the country, the fact is that the performance of Indian

sportspersons has been steadily improving. At the Commonwealth Games 2002 held in Manchester, India secured the fourth position and won 69 medals, as against 25 medals won by Indian participants in the earlier Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur. In the Commonwealth Games held at Melbourne in 2006, India retained its fourth position. Indian sportspersons have performed creditably in a number of international competitions including the First Afro-Asian Games in Hyderabad in 2003 and South Asian Federation Games in Islamabad in 2004. In the Athens Olympics, 2004, India won the first ever Silver medal in an individual event. In the Paralympic Games, 2004 at Athens, India won one gold medal in athletics and one bronze medal in power-lifting. In the Asian Games at Doha, India lifted 10-Gold, 17-Silver and 26-Bronze. In non-Olympic Sports, special mention might be made of India's outstanding performance in the recent Test Series against England.

(c) No, Sir. The preparation and training of sportspersons for major international events, is an on-going process, which takes into account inputs provided by National Sports Federations. A systematic approach is adopted to the selection and training of athletes and teams for participation in major international events by drawing up and implementing four-year roll-on Plans within the frame work of Long Term Development Programmes (LTDP) under which exceptionally talented sportspersons, selected on the basis of their performance, are put through scientifically designed continuous training programmes. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) plays an important role in this entire process by providing all-round support to high performing athletes, which includes the conduct of National Coaching Camps, providing the services of foreign coaches, and equipment support.

Slow pace of economic development in NER

470. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount allocated for development of North Eastern Region including Sikkim as on 30th June, 2007;

(b) whether it is a fact that the pace of economic development in NER is slow in comparison to other states of the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(d) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Apart from the funds allocated through the Annual Plans of the States and other Central Ministries, the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region had released Rs. 5778.96 crore during the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-03 to 2006-07) and in the current financial year (2007-08), Rs. 91.66 crore have been released till 30th June, 2007.

(b) Yes Sir, comparatively the pace of economic development in the North Eastern region has been slow.